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ABSTRACT

This evaluation of the Portland Public Schools Summer School 1984 Program analyzes achievement gains on the Portland Achievement Levels Tests for three student groups: (1) regular education; (2) not promoted; and (3) talented and gifted (TAG). The four-week program served 743 students, primarily from grades one to eight. Eleven subject areas were offered ranging from non-academic subjects to remedial, or enrichment, instruction in reading, mathematics, and language. Portland Achievement Levels RIT scores for spring and fall of 1984 were used to assess pre- and post-summer school achievement levels in reading, mathematics, and language. Mean RIT scores and gains for grades 3 through 7 are presented for each summer school program group and for the district. Spring and fall scores for 1983 for students in the 1984 summer school program and the district are also included. Achievement results for 1984 for each group are compared to district and 1983 results. In 11 of the 15 grade/subject comparisons, the not promoted group achieved summer achievement gains greater than the district average. There is some evidence that these gains are attributable to their summer instruction. Promoted students with average, or above average, achievement snowed no consistent pattern of gains or losses relative to the district. (BS)

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1983-84 EVALUATION REPORT

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IN THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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February, 1985

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EVALUATION OF THE
SUMMER SCHOOL 1984 PROGRAM
IN THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

James Kushmuk
Kan Yagi

February 1985

Portland Public Schools
Evaluation Department

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EVALUATION OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL 1984 PROGRAM

Introduction

This report presents an evaluation of the Portland Public Schools Summer School 1984 Program. Summer school classes were held at two locations, Grant High School and Wilson High School, with a total enrollment of 743 students. The evaluation is based on 691 students from this total enrollment who had attended Portland Public Schools the preceeding school year; 535 attended summer school at Grant and 156 attended summer school at Wilson[1] Table 1 shows summer school enrollment by student grade level and student status upon entering the summer program. Most students entered summer school from grades 7-8, a smaller number from kindergarten, and a few from grade 9 or special education. Nearly half (48%) were regular education students, just over one-third (38%) were students not promoted or retained, a minority (11%) talented and gifted (TAG), and a few (4%) were special education students.

A variety of classes were available to students in the four-week summer school program ranging from non-academic subjects to basic and remedial instruction in reading, mathematics, and language. All students, with the exception of one, were enrolled in two classes, usually in two different subject areas. Table 2 presents a breakdown of class units by subject area. The first four subject categories taken together show that nearly two-thirds (64%) of the summer school classes consisted of some type of reading, math, or language instruction.

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[1]The remaining 52 students from the total enrollment did not have student identification numbers which are needed to obtain test scores and verify grade level. Thus, these 52 students were not included in the evaluation.

TABLE 1

SUMMER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

	Summer School Status				
Grade	Not Promoted	Regular Education	Talented and Gifted	Special Education	Total
K	16	16			32
1	65	17	8	2	92
2	31	18	13		62
3	12	23	21	5	61
4	17	41	14		72
5	21	48	11	4	84
6	22	49	6	3	80
7	27	60	3	3	93
8	44	50		2	96
9		3			3
S				5	5
Total	255	325	76	24	680

Missing data = 13 students

TABLE 2

SUBJECT AREAS COVERED BY SUMMER SCHOOL CLASSES

Subject Area	Percent of Total Class Units
Reading, Math, and Language Basic Skills	36
Remedial Reading and Math	16
Enrichment Reading and Math	10
Writing and Language Skills	2
Computer Appreciation	5
Arts and Crafts	6
Science	2
Typing	5
Communication and Problem Solving	2
TAG Instruction	11
Special Education Instruction	3
Band (Intermediate and Advanced)	1
	99*

*Rounding error

The relationship between type of summer school instruction and student status is shown in Table 3. In Table 3, summer instruction is categorized as: (1) instruction consisting of one period in basic reading/language skills and one period of basic math skills, or reading and math which was designated as remedial; (2) instruction which included at least one period of reading or math instruction designated as enrichment; or (3) instruction which included no reading, math, or language usage subjects. Table 3 shows that virtually all of the not promoted students received basic or remedial instruction in reading, math, and language. The regular education students, on the other hand, were almost equally dispersed across the three instructional categories. Finally, the TAG group all received non-basic skills instruction. The special education students could not be classified as a group. The composition of their instruction was not known either for individuals or the group as a whole.

Method of Analyzing Achievement Gains

Achievement scores of the summer school students were analyzed to address two questions:

1. Do students who attend summer school demonstrate achievement gains above the District average which are attributable to the summer instruction which they receive?

2. Which types of students are benefitting most from the summer school experience in terms of achievement gains?

TABLE 3

TYPE OF INSTRUCTION RECEIVED BY THE THREE SUMMER SCHOOL GROUPS[a]

Summer Instruction		Status Upon Entering Summer School: Not Promoted	Regular Education	TAG	Total
1. Basic or Remedial Reading, Math, and Language	N	250	126	0	376
	%	99	39	0	58
2. Reading and Math Enrichment	N	2	95	0	97
	%	1	29	0	15
3. No Reading, Math, Language Instruction	N	1	103	76	180
	%	0	32	100	28
Total Students Grades K-9 Excluding Special Ed.	N	253	324	76	653
	%	100	100	100	101[b]

[a]The fourth group comprised of 24 Special Education students was not included since their instructional type could not be determined.

[b]Rounding error.

Portland Achievement Levels Test RIT scores for Spring 1984 and Fall 1984 were used to assess pre and post summer school achievement levels in reading, mathematics, and language usage. The RIT point difference between the spring and subsequent fall scores served as a measure of gain during the summer school period. Mean RIT scores and gains for each grade are presented for each summer school program group and for the District using clear groups.[2] In addition, clear group scores for Fall 1983 and Spring 1983 were also included for students in the 1984 summer school program and the District. The gain during summer 1983 served as a pre-program baseline measure since most of the 1984 students were not enrolled in summer school the previous year.[3] The special education group was omitted from the analysis since their number (n=24) was too small for reporting achievement means by grade.

The achievement results as reported here should be looked at with two types of comparison in mind. First, the scores for each summer school group should be compared with the District average for 1984. Second, the 1984 results should be compared with like results during the baseline period of Summer 1983. Taken together, these comparisons allow for a determination of summer school achievement gains for the three groups and some indication of whether any observed gains are attributable to the summer school experience. It was

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[2]Clear groups include only those students who had a valid test score for both spring and fall. Thus, students who entered summer school as eighth graders were not included since almost all of them did not have a fall 1984 score (9th grade), even those who were not promoted in eighth grade.

[3]A check of 265 of the summer students revealed that only 40 or 15% attended summer school during 1983.

expected that if any summer school achievement gains were found, they would be most prevalent among the Not Promoted group; that is, students who entered summer school as low achievers and who received the most instruction in reading, math, and language skills.

Tests of statistical significance were not deemed appropriate because sample sizes were small for many of the groups. Although the results are very useful in showing achievement trends, they do not warrant strong conclusions about summer school program effectiveness.

Achievement means for reading, math, and language are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6, respectively. These results for each summer school group are summarized below.

TABLE 4

READING GAINS FOR SUMMER SCHOOL GROUPS AND THE DISTRICT
(CLEAR GROUPS)

			Summer 1984 Gains					Summer 1983 Gains		
Summer School Group	Sp. '84 Grade	N	Spring 1984	Fall 1984	Gain	Sp. '83 Grade	N	Spring 1983	Fall 1983	Gain
Not Promoted		8	180.00	183.38	3.38		-	-	-	-
Regular Education	3	24	196.63	199.67	3.04	2	-	-	-	-
TAG		20	216.75	217.85	1.10		-	-	-	-
District		2978	195.94	197.49	1.55		-	-	-	-
Not Promoted		11	189.46	190.36	0.90		12	181.08	187.83	6.75
Regular Education	4	35	206.20	203.11	-3.09	3	29	195.24	195.10	-0.14
TAG		13	220.62	222.39	1.77		13	209.85	208.77	-1.08
District		2847	202.72	203.63	0.91		2850	194.51	194.70	0.19
Not Promoted		16	194.81	197.63	2.82		13	188.15	185.54	-2.61
Regular Education	5	41	212.98	213.17	0.19	4	38	204.18	207.11	2.93
TAG		7	233 71	233.71	0.00		10	222.90	225.90	3.00
District		2886	209.45	209.40	-0.05		2906	201.84	202.00	0.16
Not Promoted		13	207.77	207.31	-0.46		16	205.25	202.75	-2.50
Regular Education	6	41	213.27	213.85	0.58	5	38	209.29	207.53	-1.76
TAG		6	237.00	238.33	1.33		6	231.33	233.83	2.50
District		2855	214.39	214.34	-0.05		2820	208.66	208.28	-0.38
Not Promoted		22	207.36	210.18	2.82		18	203.44	201.78	-1.66
Regular Education	7	53	220.13	221.45	1.32	6	50	213.84	215.02	1.18
TAG		3	231.67	237.00	5.33		3	230.33	233.00	2.67
District		3122	218.43	219.64	1.21		3064	213.64	213.53	-0.11

TABLE 5

MATH GAINS FOR SUMMER SCHOOL GROUPS AND THE DISTRICT
(CLEAR GROUPS)

		Summer 1984 Gains				Summer 1983 Gains				
Summer School Group	Sp. '84 Grade	N	Spring 1984	Fall 1984	Gain	Sp. '83 Grade	N	Spring 1983	Fall 1983	Gain
Not Promoted		8	181.50	183.00	1.50		-	-	-	-
Regular Education	3	24	196.29	201.42	5.13	2	-	-	-	-
TAG		20	210.70	214.35	3.65		-	-	-	-
District		2997	195.03	197.81	2.78			-	-	-
Not Promoted		11	189.64	192.82	3.18		11	183.46	183.64	0.18
Regular Education	4	35	205.22	207.51	2.29	3	29	192.48	196.76	4.28
TAG		13	219.62	220.92	1.30		13	203.69	208.46	4.77
District		2861	204.96	206.69	1.73		2877	193.63	195.95	2.32
Not Promoted		16	200.50	201.63	1.13		12	192.50	194.58	2.08
Regular Education	5	42	215.38	216.45	1.07	4	37	207.49	209.95	2.46
TAG		8	241.38	238.00	-3.38		10	227.40	223.90	-3.50
District		2898	212.70	212.91	0.21		2929	204.35	205.15	0.80
Not Promoted		14	208.14	205.50	-2.64		16	207.06	204.69	-2.37
Regular Education	6	42	214.79	216.81	2.02	5	38	207.40	208.92	1.52
TAG		6	241.00	245.17	4.17		6	231.83	232.50	0.67
District		2868	219.25	220.03	0.78		2851	211.25	211.21	-0.04
Not Promoted		23	213.96	215.78	1.82		18	207.39	208.17	0.78
Regular Education	7	52	222.54	223.42	0.88	6	50	217.16	217.64	0.48
TAG		3	244.33	241.00	-3.33		3	235.33	235.00	-0.33
District		3133	224.98	225.72	0.74		3098	217.76	217.47	-0.29

TABLE 6

LANGUAGE GAINS FOR SUMMER SCHOOL GROUPS AND THE DISTRICT
(CLEAR GROUPS)

		Summer 1984 Gains				Summer 1983 Gains			
Summer School Group	Sp. '84 Grade	N	Spring 1984	Fall 1984	Gain	Sp. '83 Grade	N	Spring 1983	Fall 1983	Gain
Not Promoted		7	182.14	188.14	6.00		-	-	-	-
Regular Education	3	24	195.58	200.67	5.09	2	-	-	-	-
TAG		20	217.60	217.30	-0.30		-	-	-	-
District		2958	197.04	199.76	2.72		-	-	-	-
Not Promoted		10	189.90	194.30	4.40		11	182.91	186.73	3.82
Regular Education	4	35	204.83	205.43	0.60	3	29	197.69	197.21	-0.48
TAG		13	220.77	217.69	-3.08		13	207.54	208.69	1.15
District		2846	204.02	205.09	1.07		2837	195.20	196.49	1.29
Not Promoted		16	196.25	201.94	5.69		13	190.39	192.39	2.00
Regular Education	5	41	213.12	213.17	0.50	4	38	206.16	207.37	1.21
TAG		8	227.38	221.63	-6.25		10	221.30	219.00	-2.30
District		2893	210.27	209.52	-0.75		2910	202.85	202.82	-0.03
Not Promoted		13	204.00	206.23	2.23		15	201.60	201.67	0.07
Regular Education	6	41	213.22	211.76	-1.46	5	39	207.26	205.92	-1.34
TAG		6	233.17	226.00	-7.17		6	225.50	221.83	-3.67
District		2862	214.41	212.95	-1.46		2829	208.57	208.21	-0.36
Not Promoted		21	206.48	206.57	0.09		19	204.32	205.21	0.89
Regular Education	7	53	217.64	215.89	-1.75	6	49	211.06	212.12	1.06
TAG		3	232.33	226.67	-5.66		3	228.33	222.00	-6.33
District		3125	218.00	215.99	-2.01		3058	212.90	211.60	-1.30

Not Promoted or Retained Students

Reading. Students who entered summer school with their status as not promoted entered with reading achievement scores substantially below the District, especially in the lower grades where they scored 14-16 RIT points below the District average. In grades three, five, and seven, not promoted students showed gains of 2-3 RIT points above the District average gains. Grades four and six showed patterns of little change. Their results were not substantially different from the District's.

Comparisons to students' summer 1983 pre-program scores revealed that the reading gains exhibited in grades five and seven during 1984 were in marked contrast to RIT point losses of about 3 points in the previous summer, losses which compared to 1983 District averages indicating virtually no growth. In these grades, the gains relative to the District during the summer school year were greater than the like results for the pre-program year.

Math. Like reading, not promoted students entered summer school with spring achievement scores below the District average in math by 11-15 RIT points. In grades four, five, and seven the math gains were 1 to 1-1/2 points higher than the District average. In grade three, there was a gain, but it was about one point less than the District average, while in grade six there was a RIT point loss of nearly 3 points compared to the District's growth of less than one point.

While grade four showed math gains above the District average during summer 1984, these students' previous summer scores were less than the 1983 District

average. The summer 1984 gain among fifth graders and seventh graders compared to summer 1983 gains which were also greater than that year's District average gains.

Language. Language scores, like the other subjects, were below the spring District average by 10-14 RIT points for the not promoted students. In grades three, four, five, and six, language gains were in the range of 3-6 RIT points above the District average. In grade seven, not promoted students showed zero growth, but this compared to a District loss of 2 RIT points.

Comparisons to 1983 pre-program scores showed that during the previous summer, students from most grades also attained language achievement scores above the 1983 District average. However, the gains during summer 1984 were generally larger than those during the previous summer.

Regular Education Students

Reading. Regular education students entered summer school with reading achievement levels approximately equal to the District average across all grades. Only in grade three did these students attain a summer gain above the District average, a gain which was higher than the District's by about 1-1/2 RIT points. In grade four, there was a loss of 3 RIT points in comparison to a District gain of almost 1 point. In the other grades, the achievement gains of the regular education students were not substantially different from the District gains.

Math. In math, regular education students entered summer school with spring achievement scores close to the District average. In grade 3, a math gain of 5 RIT points was found which compared to a District average of less than 3 points. In the other grades, gains were only slightly greater than the District average, or equal to the District average in grade seven.

The summer gains observed in math during summer 1984 over the District were smaller than students' gains over the District during the previous non-program summer.

Language. Regular education students also showed a level of achievement near the District average in their pre-summer language scores. In grade three, a RIT gain of 5 points compared to a District average of nearly 3 points. In grades four, six, and seven, regular education students were equal to or nearly equal to the District average, while in grade five they were slightly ahead of the District.

Fifth graders who showed a slight language gain relative to the District in 1984 had a Summer 1983 gain which was also above the District average gain.

Talented and Gifted Students

Reading. As expected, students in the TAG program entered summer school with spring reading achievement scores well above the District average in all grades; generally by 20-25 RIT points. Grade three and grade five TAG students were about equal to the District average in their summer 1984 gains,

while in grades four, six, and seven they were above the District average by 1-4 RIT points.

Comparisons to the previous summer revealed that students from grade seven who showed reading gains during 1984 also achieved gains greater than the District average during 1983.

Math. The spring 1984 math scores of TAG students were also well above the District average by 15-29 RIT points depending upon the grade level. In grades three and six, summer gains were above the District average. Grade four students came very close to the average District gain. In grades five and seven, the small number of TAG students exhibited RIT point losses in contrast to the District gains of less than one point.

The Summer 1984 math gain for grade six TAG students, which was 3 RIT points higher than the District gain, compared to a 1983 pattern where the same students were less than 1 point above the District in summer gain.

Language. Language scores, like reading and math, were above the District average during the pre-summer school testing by 14-21 RIT points for TAG students. Unlike the other two subjects, TAG students in third grade showed a slight loss during the summer in contrast to a District gain of nearly three points. Those in the other grades showed even greater achievement losses of 3-7 RIT points, which in every grade were below District gains.

Summary of Achievement Results

Figures 1, 2, and 3 present graphic summaries of the achievement results for the 1984 summer school session for reading, math, and language, respectively. It was expected that the not promoted students would be the most likely group to experience achievement gains while in summer school given that they entered the program as low achievers and that their instruction was focused on basic skills. This prediction was borne out. In 11 of the 15 grade/subject comparisons, the Not Promoted group achieved summer gains greater than the District average. There was only one substantial loss: the not promoted sixth graders showed a summer loss of nearly 3 RIT points in comparison to the District gain of nearly 1 RIT point. The strongest and most consistent gains for not promoted students were in language usage. This was somewhat surprising given that the focus of instruction was in reading and math skills.

The Promoted group, which included regular education summer school enrollees and a handful of TAG students, generally showed gains close to the District average. Some of the grade/subject comparisons yielded gains greater than the District, while only one yielded a substantial loss; fourth graders showed a loss of 3 RIT points in reading in comparison to a District gain of 1 RIT point. The promoted students entered summer school with spring achievement scores equal to or above the District average and, as a group, received instruction which included basic skills, other academic subjects, and non-academic subjects. Thus, gains substantially higher than the District as a whole were not expected for this group.

Summer school students' achievement gains from the previous summer (1983) were also analyzed as a pre-program comparison. Although a small number did attend

FIGURE 1. SUMMER READING GAINS

SPRING 1984 TO FALL 1984 GAINS

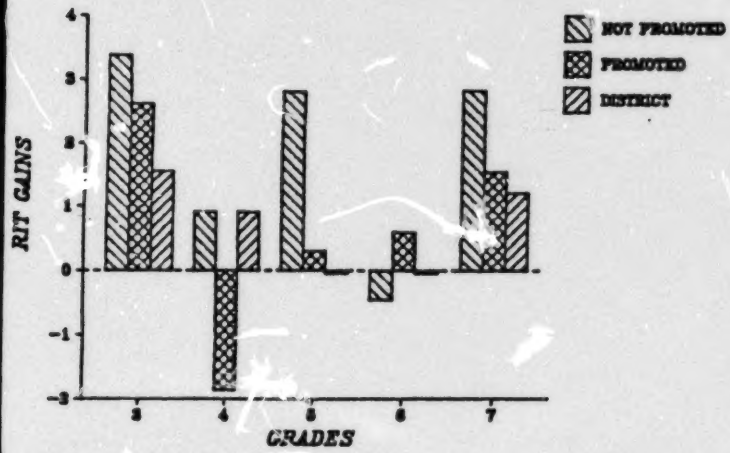


FIGURE 2. SUMMER MATH GAINS

SPRING 1984 TO FALL 1984 GAINS

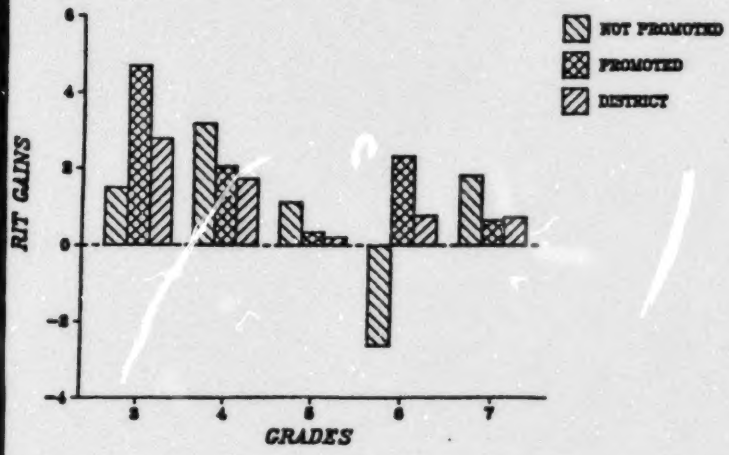
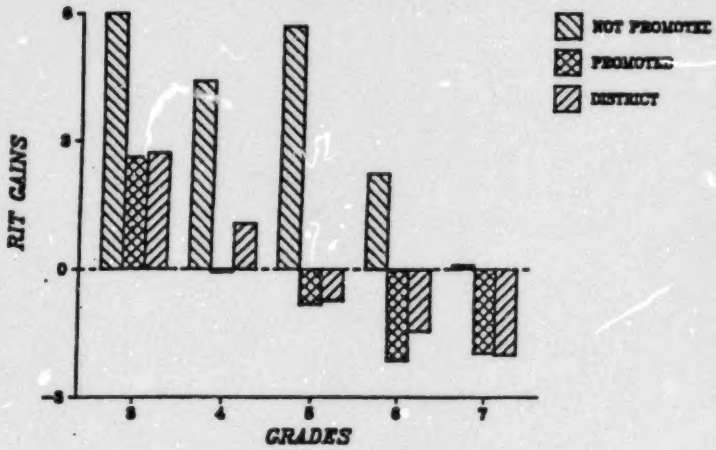


FIGURE 3. SUMMER LANGUAGE GAINS

SPRING 1984 TO FALL 1984 GAINS



COMMENTS:

- *Not Promoted and Promoted students attended summer school for a total of four weeks.*
- *All gains are for clear groups.*
- *RIT gains are non-standardized differences between spring and fall.*
- *Grade is the Spring 1984 grade level.*

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summer school the previous year, most did not. The most important finding was that, among the Not Promoted group, the gains relative to the District observed in 1984 were greater than those during the pre-program summer. These findings are encouraging. They support an interpretation of the 1984 gains as being attributable to summer school instruction in reading, math, and language.

Findings

These findings, in many cases, are based on small numbers of students and therefore are most useful as a descriptive picture of the Summer School 1984 Program. Strong conclusions about summer school effectivenss in general are not warranted.

1. Low-achieving students who entered the Summer School 1984 Program as "not promoted" and received basic skills instruction exhibited a fairly consistent pattern of achievement gain greater than the District average. The gain was small in absolute RIT points, yet commensurate with a summer program which lasted four weeks with two periods per day. There was evidence indicating that these gains were attributable to the reading/language and math instruction which not promoted students received.

2. The other students who were promoted upon entering summer school were at the average or above average level of achievement and received instruction in basic skills and other subjects. These students showed no consistent pattern of gains or losses relative to the District during Summer 1984.

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